FIRST AMERICAN PEERESS

Mrs. Joseph Chamberlain, Who Is Soon to Become Countess of Highbury, First American Woman to Be Thus Honored.

Her Husband Follows the Precedent Established by Disraeli in Accepting a Peerage for His Wife, While Declining It Himself.

Daughter of the Famous Massachusetts Endicotts Now a Powerful Social and Political Factor in the Affairs of England.

HIGHBURY, VIEWED FROM THE WEST

THE HIGHBURY HALL

THE RIGHT HON. JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN M. P.

MRS. J. CHAMBERLAIN, FORMERLY MARY ENDICOTT OF SALEM AND BOSTON

MRS JOSEPH CHAMBERLAIN, the American wife of the British secretary for the colonies, is to be created viscountess of Highbury by the King.

King Edward will follow the precedent established in the case of Disraeli, who, in 1868, declined a peerage for himself, but accepted one for his wife.

Mr. Chamberlain is averse to having a peerage conferred upon him, as was Mr. Gladstone. Mrs. Chamberlain will be called Viscountess Highbury, taking the title from the name of the Chamberlain country place near Birmingham.

Of Old England Stock.

The future viscountess was Miss Mary Endicott, of Salem, Mass. She is a descendant of one of the most famous of the best New England families, and her marriage with Mr. Chamberlain possessed much historic as well as social interest. Governor Endicott, the first governor of Massachusetts, was an ancestor of the bride, and the prominence of the Endicott family, which has held many distinguished public offices in Massachusetts during the three centuries intervening, made Mary Endicott a fitting mate for the distinguished English statesman.

Mrs. Chamberlain's early training fitted her admirably to become the woman of whom her husband said recently: "She has sustained me by her courage and cheered me by her sympathy. I have found in her my best and truest counselor."

Briliant Intellectual Surroundings.

Always a studious child, she early developed the brilliant intellectual powers to be expected from a daughter of the house of Endicott. From her childhood Mary Endicott was the companion of her father, Judge Endicott, and of her grandfather, George Peabody. Under the intellectual stimulus of such association the girl gained not only the poise and development which have made her a power in the social and political life of her adopted country, but gave her the rare quality of comradeship which has made her the most valued friend and adviser of her husband.

Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlain have often visited America, where they are entertained in the historic mansions which for centuries have been the homes of the Endicotts. The old homestead at Danvers, which was built early in the last century by Joseph Peabody, Mrs. Chamberlain's great-grandfather, was the place where most of her girlhood was spent, and which she is fonedst of visiting when in this country.

Judge and Mrs. Endicott, parents of Mrs. Chamberlain, were always in the habit of spending the winters at the family home in Salem, and the summers at Danvers or Nahant.

In 1884 Judge Endicott took his place in the Cleveland Cabinet, and Miss Endicott entered into the brilliant social life of the Capital.

The best and most exclusive circles were open to the family in Washington, as they were in Boston, and Miss Endicott soon became one of the prominent figures in the younger set.

Shortly after the family became established in Washington, Miss Endicott met her fate. Mr. Chamberlain was on a visit to Washington at the time, and the two met at a little luncheon given by a Mrs. Matthews to some of her young girl friends. It was a most informal and unpretentious affair, to which Mr. Chamberlain had been invited as a joke, and at which he was the only man present.

Love at First Sight.

Before luncheon was over, Miss Endicott was the only woman present, so far as Mr. Chamberlain was concerned. It was a case of love at first sight, and the distinguished Englishman followed up the affair with an impetuosity more characteristic of a knight errant in medieval days than a world famous statesman in dignified diplomatic circles at the Capital. Before the end of the month the engagement was announced, and the wedding followed a fortnight later.

No attempt at display was made at the wedding, or at the simple breakfast, at which only water was drunk. After a short wedding tour in Maryland, Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlain went to England, where their home has been ever since.

Mrs. Chamberlain has in no way relinquished her love for the home of her birth, and she is always delighted to meet the friends of her youth when the latter are in England. She never fails to call upon them and to invite them to her home.

Queen Victoria's Friend.

That she has been as beloved in England as in her native land is shown by the fact that she is said to be the only American woman who won entire favor with the late Queen Victoria, who presented her with the gold commemoration medal at the time of the diamond jubilee, which, with this one exception, was conferred only upon members of reigning houses.

The marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Chamberlain has been one of complete happiness, and Mr. Chamberlain depends much upon his wife's sympathy and judgment. She is with him wherever he goes, sitting by his side on the platform while he delivers his speeches, and in the ladies' gallery of the House of Commons when he is to speak.

Mrs. Chamberlain is a person who dislikes ostentation, and is always quietly and simply dressed. Her heart is in her home, and her life is devoted to her husband.

In fact, she might almost be termed one of the "unknown wives of well-known men," so far as the world at large is concerned. She is distinctly the power behind the throne. Understanding fully the affairs of world-wide importance in which her husband is one of the leading figures, and with an intelligent grasp of the political situation in Europe, she yet remains in the background, content to be an inspiration to the husband whose co-worker she is, rather than to cultivate any personal prominence.

On the table in Mr. Chamberlain's study stands the portrait of his wife as she appeared when he first met her, and in the gallery hangs another, painted by Millais.

At the time of his wedding Mr. Chamberlain for the first time discarded his favorite orchid for boutonniere of white violets, his bride's favorite.

Highbury, the country home of the Chamberlains, is two miles from Birmingham and is a large modern mansion. Mr. Chamberlain has never shown any desire to pose as a squire and his country home is essentially the ideal of what a suburban house should be and is a charming retreat for its busy master and mistress.

The great hall, which may be used as a sitting room or ballroom, compares most favorably with some of the state apartments in historic country houses. From the drawing room opens a long series of hothouses, where are grown the famous orchids and roses that are Mr. Chamberlain's hobby. There are more than thirty greenhouses at Highbury.

Mrs. Chamberlain has always manifested the greatest interest in her husband's work. In addition to her friendship with the late Queen Victoria, she became interested in politics soon after her marriage, and mastered all the intricacies of British political life.

Her Husband's Tribute.

That Mr. Chamberlain has learned to rely upon his wife's judgment and ability is shown in his reply to the London lord mayor's speech of welcome home from South Africa, when he said:

"The lord mayor justly associates my wife's name with mine. Of my personal obligations to her there is no time to speak, but so far as the nation is concerned she is entitled to some share of its gratitude in the work of reconciliation in South Africa. Her kindness, sympathy and interest made friends where I might have failed."

THE DRAWING ROOM AT HIGHBURY

THE LIBRARY AT HIGHBURY

Quaint Chinaware

THE fad for quaint and curious chinaware has brought out any number of novelties along this line. Each of the large shops features in its display this fall exclusive importations in odd or antique design. The majority of these pieces are intended for decorative purposes only, but some, including fascinating tea services, are suited for occasional use upon the table.

In Royal Doulton are seen pitchers and vases in extremely weird effects. These are tall and slender in shape and are colored a deep highly glazed brown. On one side of each is a mysterious figure done in dull reds, yellows and black. A lean Pied Piper stalks on one, rats scamper about his heels and a stormy sky is suggested in the background. On another a witch in pointed hat crosses over a tiny black cauldron set in the foreground. From the pot a thin line of steam arises to curl in halo form about her head. A third design shows a gypsy figure.

Novel tea sets in Royal Daulton are circled with galloping huntsmen, done in gay colors. Others are decorated with men and women dressed in the picturesque costumes of the days of George IV.

From Finland comes a most striking ware patterned after the Arabian potteries. The pieces are cream color, in odd geometric shapes, with ornamental bands of geometric design, done in vivid reds, yellows, blues and greens.

Old English Trentham ware is an effective revival of the year. Pieces of all sizes, from candlesticks to umbrella stands, may be had in this. Gayly colored fruits and flowers form the decorations on some pieces, while others show bees swimming to a hive or very black cocks with very red combs.

In Dresden china the old fashioned fruit baskets, in openwork ornamented with large, floral and fruit designs, have been revived this fall.

INTERESTING ART TREASURES OF THE WHITE HOUSE

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IN EVERY large city in the country may be found collections of art objects which far surpass in number and intrinsic value those to be found at the White House in Washington, and yet it is doubtful whether there is in the length and breadth of the land any other similar accumulation which is half so interesting. Rarity is, of course, a characteristic of almost every piece of bric-a-brac to be found in the home of the Presidents; but, aside from this, is the fact that almost every trophy is fraught with memories and associations which make it a prized possession.

The scheme of redecoration carried out in the refurnished White House made necessary the retirement of many of the furnishings which occupied conspicuous places in the private apartments of the Executive Mansion in the old days; but a sufficient number remain to constitute representatives of many different Administrations. It may be noted, by the way, that there has been a great difference in the contributions made to the White House. President Arthur had, perhaps, more of the collector's spirit than has been inherent in any other man who has served as Chief Magistrate, and yet there now remain few of the trophies for which he spent such goodly sums. Places of prominence are yet accorded, however, to several of the rich specimens added to the White House treasure trove by Mrs. Grant, who was always a great admirers of beautiful furnishings and brought many to the first residence of the land.

Probably the most notable art treasure to be found in the White House is a French gilt clock, which stands on the mantelpiece in the Blue Room—the apartment in which stand the President and receiving party on all state occasions. This famous clock was a gift from Napoleon Bonaparte to Lafayette, and by the latter presented to the United States Government. It is flanked by candlesticks of the style of the first empire, which, strangely enough, constituted a gift from the first French republic to the first President of the first republic of the new world.

Clock and vases are all of solid bronze gilt. The former is three feet in length and is surmounted by a female figure in a sitting posture wearing a Phrygian cap. The vases are tall and slender and characterized by the beauty and delicacy which distinguished the best seventeenth century art. Their bas-relief designs represent scenes in the early history of France. In contrast to these early tokens of Franco-American fraternity is the pair of huge ultramarine Sevres vases presented August 17, 1898, by M. Felix Faure, President of the French Republic, in commemoration of the completion of the Franco-American cable. These vases, it may be recalled, did not reach the White House until after the death of the donor.

In front of the fireplace in the Blue Room stand two branching candlesticks, nearly five feet tall, and also in French gilt. They were presented to President Andrew Jackson by Robert Patterson of Philadelphia, who later rendered distinguished service as a brigadier general in the Mexican war. These massive ornaments are always of especial interest to feminine visitors to the White House, for between these candlesticks, which were filled with wax candles, stood President Cleveland and Miss Frances Folsom, when they were married in the Blue Room at the White House.

On the mantel in the Green Parlor are two slender vases supposed to be the oldest pieces of bric-a-brac in the White House, although there is nothing to indicate where or when they were made. Between them stands a gilt and onyx clock, which was purchased by Mrs. Grant. Directly before the fireplace stands another trophy of the Grant regime—a gilt and tapestry screen which was the gift of the Austrian government two months before the expiration of the Presidential term of the great civil war leader and which had attracted much attention at the Centennial at Philadelphia. The main portion of the screen is surmounted by the figure of an eagle with outspread wings.

On the mantel in the Red Room are a pair of alabaster and gilt vases purchased by President Buchanan for the White House and supposed to exemplify the artistic taste of the famous Harriet Lane, then mistress of the White House. In this same apartment are the quaint and beautifully gowned dolls which were presented by the Japanese minister comparatively but a short time ago on behalf of the Mikado. Other White House art treasures include the odd vase presented some years since by the King of Siam, and the red vases of old Sevres sent by Napoleon III to President Franklin Pierce. On one of them is an excellent painting of Charlotte Corday receiving the sentence of the tribunal for her murder of Marat, and the painting on the other depicts Marie Antoinette in the presence of Robespierre.

It may be explained, just here, that some of these interesting souvenirs which link our chief magistrates with the imperial, royal, and civil heads of foreign government have been given to Presidents as individuals instead of having been presented to the President as President, but in such cases the recipients have without exception left them behind when leaving the Executive Mansion or have informally presented them to the nation. Some of the most interesting of the historic art pieces at the White House are seldom, if ever, seen by the public. Notable among these are the massive candelabrum and vases of bronze and gilt fruit baskets which were purchased many years ago—so long since that no one remembers the date—to adorn the dining table on the occasion of state banquets, but which are now seldom used.

This same fate has been shared by the cherished centerpiece chosen by Mrs. Grant, a silver canoe four feet in length, representing the birch bark of Hiawatha, and by Dolly Madison's rectangular "plateau," a gilt-framed mirror which can be shortened or lengthened, its purpose being to simulate a lake in the middle of the table. Lately these have been replaced as ornaments for the table at state dinners by the twenty-six dancing girls of biscuit de Sevres, the statuettes which were sent to the White House by President Loubet of France at the time of the unveiling of the Rochambeau statue. Included among the art treasures in the diningroom are also some splendid silver candlesticks of purest Colonial design.

Probably the most artistic furniture in the White House is that in the dining rooms, notably the antique mahogany table, sideboard, and serving tables in the private dining room and the immense mahogany sideboard supported by eagles with outspread wings, in the state dining room, which was designed by Mrs. Roosevelt and constructed expressly to her order. Although Mrs. Roosevelt's design was purely original, there has lately been found on an old Maryland estate an antique sideboard which is almost an exact counterpart of the White House piece, spread eagles and all, and which conclusively proves how closely Mrs. Roosevelt's design adheres to colonials tenets.

The old Flemish tapestries in the state dining room, bearing inscriptions from Virgil, have, of course, prominent place among the art furnishings of the White House, and doubtless the category of the ornamental trophies in this apartment would be considered incomplete without reference to the mounted game heads which adorn the cornice. Over the big open fireplace is a moose head, flanked on either side by the head of a mountain sheep. In the center of the wall opposite is the immense moose head presented to the President by friends in Alaska. On either side of the moose head is a bear head, and the ends of the line are held, respectively, by a buffalo head and the caribou head presented by Senator Quay. The third wall has an elk head and two deer head, and the fourth wall has one deer head and the head of a mountain sheep.

The mantels in the reconstructed White House are richly entitled to rank as art objects, being among the most attractive features of the entire new decorative scheme. The mantel in the state dining room, the gem of the collection, is of light freestone, richly carved. In the Red and Green parlors, respectively, have been placed the two very beautiful white marble caryatid mantels which were formerly in the old state dining room, having been placed there when the "President's palace" was built. In the great East Room are four mantels which contrast most effectively with the white decorative scheme of the grand salon. Two of them are in Fleur de Peche marble from the Pyrenees, while the other two are in fine Rouge jasper and Rouge Royale from the quarries at Cararra.

Oddly enough the pictures are in the eyes of many visitors, the most unsatisfactory art treasures in the White House. The Government has followed the plan of allowing every President on retiring the sum of $2,500 to have his portrait painted in order that the likeness may be placed on the walls of the White House. Some of the resultant canvases are declared by critics to be far from notable from an art standpoint. Of late, however, all visitors have manifested a deepened interest in the pictures of the White House, owing to the recent addition to the collection of the Chartran portrait of Mrs. Roosevelt, the Sargent painting of the President, and the Murphy portrait of Mr. McKinley. The full-sized portrait of Mrs. Harrison, and the likenesses of Mrs. Van Buren and Mrs. Tyler in quaint gowns have always been favorites with feminine visitors.

Ostrich Feathers

"HARDLY any woman who owns an ostrich feather thinks of washing it at home," said a well-known F FStreet milliner the other day. "She believes the cleaning of the feather involves some intricate and difficult process, and is withal such a delicate matter that it can only be accomplished by a professional cleaner. But if she only knew it, cleaning an ostrich feather is not any more difficult than cleaning a bit of lace. All there is to it is to know how, and that is what I'll tell you. A suds of soap and lukewarm water must be prepared, and then the soiled feather should be dipped into it and drawn through the hands a few times, as often as necessary, until the feather appears clean. Under no circumstances should it be allowed to remain in the soapy water; just dip it in and then draw it through the hand to squeeze the water and soap from it before dipping it in again. If it is very dirty it ought to be washed in two suds; then, when the cleaning process is over, it must be rinsed through several bowls of clear, cool water, the rinsing method being the same as the cleaning, dipping the feather in the water and then drawing it through the hand. When it is thoroughly rinsed it must be drawn through the hand repeatedly until it is about dry; then it should be placed on the thigh and slapped with the hand, to bring it out fluffy. That is the whole operation. The fluffing of the feather may require a little practice, and it would be well to clean a poor feather before taking a more expensive one through this course of home cleaning, in order that the necessary dexterity, a thing that readily comes to one, may be obtained."

NO NEED FOR KNOWLEDGE.

Cholly—A fellow told me today that I didn't know enough to go in when it rained.

Miss Sharp—And what did you say?

Cholly—I assuhed him it was quite unnecessary, doncher know, because I nevah go out when it rains.—Philadelphia Ledger.